(छ) 1993-94 के दौरान लौह अयस्क के निर्यात से अर्जित अनुमानित विदेशी मुद्रा लगभग 52 करोड़ प्रति दस लाख टन थी जबकि परिसज्जित इस्पात के निर्यात के अर्जित विदेशी मुद्रा 943 करोड़ रुपए प्रति दस लाख टन थी।

Sale of Bailadila Mine

3360. SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Bailadila mine to be sold to Essar or Nippon Denro" brought out in the Business Standard, New Delhi dated the 23rd July, 1994;

(b) whether any investigation has been ordered into the whole episode to find out the actual reasons for such proposed sale;

(c) whether it is a fact that some production managers of the controlling company, a PSU, are joining hands with private parties;

(d) whether Government have intervened into the decision taken by the company as reported; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The iron ore available at Bailadila Iron Ore Deposit No. 11-B in Bastar District of Madhya Pradesh is reportedly best suited for production of sponge iron in gas-based plants. It is therefore proposed to take up development of this deposit as a joint venture between National Mineral Development Corporation Limited (NMDC) and one of the private sector entrepreneurs who are operating or setting up a gas-based sponge iron ore plant in the country and who already have an assurance from NMDC to meet a substantial part of the plant's requirement of iron ore.

(c) NMDC has reported that it does not have any such information.

(d) and (e) The proposal to implement the project as a joint venture has the approval of the Government.

*Source: Statistical Year Book. 1993, IISI, BRUSSELS.

Steel Consumption

3361. SHRI YERRA NARAYANA SWAMY: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) what is the per capita rate of steel consumption in the country;

(b) whether there are plans to increase the availability of steel at cheaper prices to the agricultural and rural sector;

(c) whether Government propose to ensure that cheaper steel items are available to the people in rural area;

(d) whether more distribution centres will be set up;

(e) whether SAIL has taken any note of the steel items in demand in rural areas; and

(f) if so, the details thereof.'

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) The Per Capita apparent consumption of crude steel in the country in 1992 was 21.7 kg.*

(b) and (c) After de-regulation of prices and distribution w.e.f. 16th January, 1992, Government has no control over the prices of steel and they are governed by market forces. There is at present no shortage of steel in the country and Main Producers are having inventories of about 1.1 million tonnes as on 1.7.1994.

(d) Taking into the consideration the steel demand at various consumption centres, the Main Producers may open new distribution outlets where required.

(e) and (f) SAIL has taken note of the steel items in demand in the rural areas and is catering to the various market segments including agricultural and rural sectors through its net work of 57 distribution points. SAIL is also supplying steel on priority to the Small Scale Industries Corporations (SSICs) of the different states with rebates. SSICs in turn meet the demand of the small scale units located throughout the State. SAIL is also contemplating opening additional outlets to meet the small requirements of steel - in remote areas of the country.